
Sharing Economy: A case of customer-to-customer marketing



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Sharing economy, Customer-to-customer marketing, Customer group benefit, Common goods, Network business, Diffusion Acceleration, Acceptance and Adoption Problems

Sharing Economy, Customer-to-customer Marketing, Gruppennutzen, Gruppengüter, Netzwerkgeschäft, Diffusionsbeschleunigung, Akzeptanz- und Adoptionsprobleme



Many business models in the sharing economy still have adoption problems among customers. This is especially due to providers not having sufficient regard for the specific nature of the sharing economy in their marketing activities. This contribution shows that most offers in the sharing economy are characterized by the benefits to customers that result from the number or the behavior of other customers. Therefore, the sharing economy has to be considered as a branch of customer-to-customer marketing. In order to tackle the existing adoption problems and to accelerate the diffusion of sharing economy offers, the marketing instruments of customer-to-customer marketing can be used to optimize sharing economy dissemination. Thus, this paper presents and discusses suitable instruments

to face marketing problems of the sharing economy.

Viele Geschäftsmodelle in der Sharing Economy weisen kundenseitig Adoptionsprobleme auf. Dies kann insbesondere darauf zurückgeführt werden, dass Anbieter die spezifischen Besonderheiten der Sharing Economy in ihren Marketing-Aktivitäten nicht berücksichtigen. Dieser Beitrag zeigt, dass die überwiegende Anzahl an Sharing Economy Angeboten durch den Kundennutzen charakterisiert ist, der sich aus der Anzahl oder dem Verhalten von anderen Nutzern ergibt. Daher ist die Vermarktung von Sharing Economy Angeboten dem Customer-to-Customer-Marketing zuzuordnen. Um die bestehenden kundenseitigen Adoptionshemmnisse zu überwinden und die Diffusion von Sharing Economy Angeboten zu beschleunigen, können Marketinginstrumente des Customer-to-Customer-Marketings eingesetzt werden. Dieser Beitrag stellt entsprechende Marketinginstrumente vor, um die Marketingprobleme der Sharing Economy zu lösen.

1 Introduction

The sharing economy is one of the sectors in our economy that have major growth potential (Belk 2014). Although the term ‘sharing economy’ is a multifaceted notion that is often used as a buzzword, it tends to be based on the concept of sharing, exchanging and hiring products or services (Keller 2013). Typical examples of business models in this sec-

tor are car-sharing offers like Car2Go, a service that facilitates room or home sharing like Airbnb, experience sharing like why own it, or vacation sharing like the services offered through couchsurfing platforms (Kindel et al. 2015). The sharing economy's large economic potential, and the success of sharing services in particular, coincides with the global economic crisis and economic changes. It is based on and results from the usage pattern and behavior of resource providers (Botsman/Rogers 2010; John 2013a). Moreover, consumers review their habits and reconsider their values and their ownership. They have become more resourceful (Bardhi/Eckhard 2012) and keep in mind the increasing costs of acquiring and maintaining ownership over time (Cheshire et al. 2010).

However, it is impossible for the sharing economy always to meet the expectations associated with its potential; for example, the actual dissemination of car sharing does not match expected distribution. Very positive dissemination forecasts are mostly based on studies that examine the general willingness to participate in services such as car sharing. These forecasts consistently draw the conclusion that a large proportion of the population can imagine taking part in sharing economy offers. And yet, the number of participants falls short of expectations. In the sharing economy, providers lack the appropriate marketing approaches to transform prospective customers into participating customers. If they want to contribute to an acceleration of diffusion processes in the market, these marketing approaches need to be orientated toward the characteristics of sharing economy services (Loose 2007). The characteristics of sharing economy services come to the fore when demanders use goods together (Keller 2013) – an application of customer-to-customer marketing. Customer-to-customer marketing is becoming increasingly more important. Instead of business-to-consumer marketing, more and more customer-to-customer marketing offers are appearing on the market. Customers are highly involved and offer products and services to other customers or use goods together (Levin et al. 2000). Thus, a customer group can benefit from interaction with other customers (Voeth 2003). In a sharing economy, customers share their possessions with other customers or offer them services (Kindel et al. 2015). Hence, the sharing economy can be seen as an example of customer-to-customer marketing. Consequently, customer-to-customer marketing measures can (and must) be used to strengthen the adoption and diffusion of sharing economy offers on the market. This paper seeks to contribute to an understanding of how the basic considerations of customer-to-customer marketing can be used to develop particular marketing instruments for sharing economy providers to solve adoption problems.

The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 offers a description of a sharing economy from the perspective of customer-to-customer marketing. The section also identifies in which type of customer-to-customer marketing the sharing economy offers are made. In addition, dimensions of the customer group benefit are presented. Section 3 deals with marketing measures to accelerate the adoption and diffusion of sharing economy offers. The paper concludes with a summary in section 4.

2 Sharing economy from the perspective of customer-to-customer marketing

Key characteristics of customer-to-customer marketing

Marketing has changed over the past few decades and can be seen as an entrepreneurial subtask, as well as a cross-divisional function within companies (Homburg 2000). In this way, the defining principle of marketing in which providers and demanders face each other

er takes many different shapes out in many ways. One of these ways is customer-to-customer marketing, a sub-perspective of marketing with respect to the customer group benefit. In customer-to-customer marketing, the general customer demand elements are the main focus, and it is of paramount importance that the customer group receives the benefit. The main subjects are marketing processes in which the demand-sided benefit depends to a considerable extent on other demanders (*here and in the following Voeth 2003*). Private car sharing could serve as an example. In a private car-sharing service like Uber, personal benefit depends on the willingness of other participants to use their car to provide transport to someone else (*Kindel et al. 2015*).

In practice, it is possible to discern demand-side initiated marketing situations with a general customer demand benefit emergence (observable in customer-to-customer marketing) in large numbers and in various forms. They are accompanied by various forms of sharing. At present in the digital age, Internet technologies enable customers to share products and services via platforms. Examples include:

- JustPark, a platform that matches drivers with parking spaces and facilitates the search for a parking space; and
- Zilok, which matches people who like to rent anything from power tools or cars to vacation locations or equipment (*Matzner et al. 2015; Zilok 2015; JustPark 2015*).

A common feature of the marketing situations mentioned above is that providers are faced with mostly formally autonomous demanders during the transaction process. For demanders, the benefit resulting from the transaction depends on other demanders and includes external benefit components. In addition, the examples of Zilok and JustPark show that the number and/or behavior of other demanders can affect the external benefit (*Voeth 2003, Matzner et al. 2015*).

- Number of other users: Favorable conditions will be high if a large number of other demanders conglomerate for a collective order.
- Behavior of other users: The benefit that the users of JustPark experience depends substantially on the behavior of other users and their willingness to share parking spaces.
- Number and behavior of other users: On a rental platform like Zilok, the benefit to individuals depends on the number of remaining participants. The number is crucial, as it influences how many other users the individual can contact. The benefit is also affected by the extent to which the other users use the platform.

The aforementioned determinants (number of other users, behavior of other users and the combination of both) are key determinants of customer-to-customer marketing. Because marketing processes in customer-to-customer marketing consist of several independent demanders whose transaction-dependent benefit is influenced by other users and whose individually experienced benefit can be described as a customer group benefit, the relevant services are supposed to be common goods. A common good is a good or a service that is jointly procured and used by at least two independent demanders, either separately or together. For this reason, the benefit depends on other users (*Voeth 2003*). For example, in a sharing economy, a common good can be observed in the car-sharing service DriveNow, an initiative by the automotive manufacturer BMW and the car hire company Sixt. These two firms jointly run the sharing economy concept and provide their offers to customers (*DriveNow 2015*).

Dimensions of the customer group benefit

The distinctive feature of common use is a key characteristic of customer-to-customer marketing. Moreover, customer-to-customer marketing involves many individuals who are interrelated (*cf. here and in the following Voeth 2003*). The sharing economy also thrives because of the interaction between several users and the resulting customer group benefit (*Matzner et al. 2015*). Because various forms of customer group benefit result in the difference of the marketing challenges in customer-to-customer marketing, the question arises which dimensions affect the customer group benefit. *Voeth (2003)* analyzed two main dimensions:

- the creation and formation of a group that influences the benefit and
- the type of customer group benefit.

The first dimension looks at how the customer group benefit emerges. For both the demander and the provider, it is essential that the group influencing the individual demander's overall benefit already exist in the run-up to the purchase process or that it forms during (or exclusively) for the purchase process. In the case of a sharing economy, the marketing measures are different for a group that already exists, like Zilok, than for one that reconstitutes itself every time, as is the case with car sharing. At Zilok it is important that customers be kept on the platform by means of appropriate measures in order to facilitate a prosperous exchange (*Matzner et al 2015; Hamari et al. 2015; Zilok 2015*). With car sharing, by contrast, customers have to get to know the possibilities and advantages of sharing and take note of them (*Bardhil/ Eckhardt 2012*). The dimension type of the group's usage focuses on the question as to how the customer group benefit comes about within the group. Group-induced benefit components can arise if various individuals use goods jointly, which is called 'usage-related customer group benefit.'

Marketing types in customer-to-customer marketing

In order to derive marketing types (*cf. Figure 1 (Voeth 2003)*) in customer-to-customer marketing, it is of interest to note the extent to which providers need to vary their market behavior, which depends on the form of the customer group benefit and related common goods. Provided that services are capitalized on groups comprising various autonomous demanders and already stand firm at the beginning of the marketing process, the business type is called a group business. Examples of this type include a family holiday or a purchasing cooperation. By contrast, in the bundling of customers, business providers face the challenge of persuading demanders to consolidate their needs with those of other demanders and to ensure that the considered provider will satisfy their demands. Demanders are normally only prepared to do so if they can reach group rates. A characteristic of the third marketing type is that providers need to build up a group whose members are connected through the commonly used service and the usage-related customer group benefit. This is comparable to the building of a network and is called a network business (*Voeth 2003*). This business type is related to the sharing economy. Sharing economy offers imply a sharing, exchanging or hiring of products or services (*Keller 2013*), which produces a sharing network and results in a customer group benefit (*Kindel et al. 2015*). *Figure 1 (Voeth 2003)* provides an overview of the differentiated marketing types in customer-to-customer marketing.

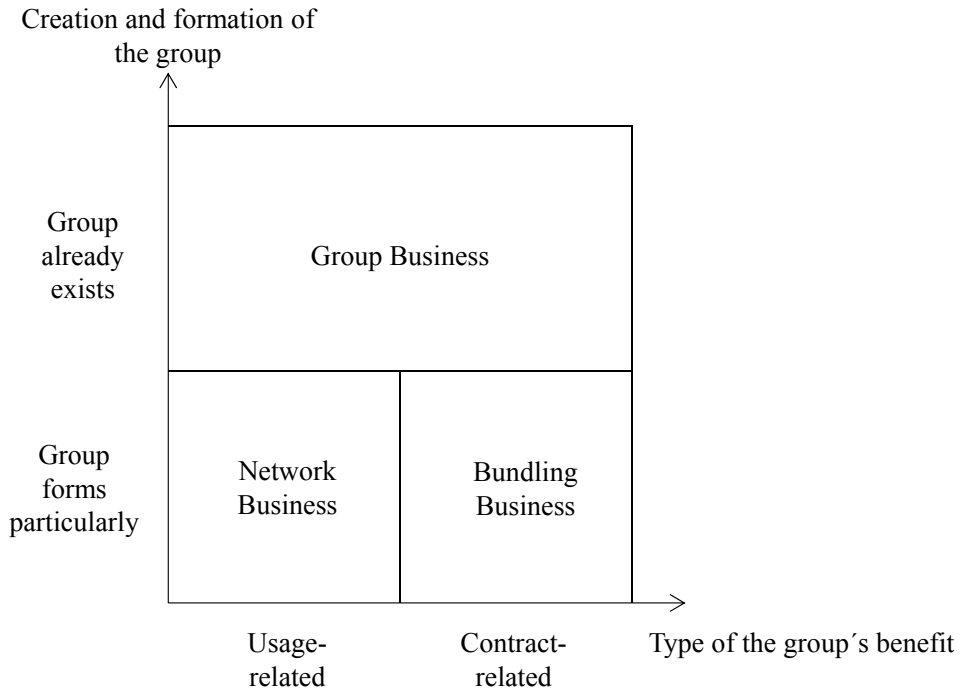


Figure 1: Marketing types in customer-to-customer marketing (Voeth 2003)

Critical mass problem

In the network business, the main problem is reaching a certain amount of people who use the system or the offers provided. The same problem can be observed at the beginning of a new sharing economy business. Sharing networks need to be built up, and the usage-related customer group benefit has to be generated (Belk 2014). While constructing the network, providers consider the influence of the number of participants to be of paramount importance. The fundamental problem with this notion, however, is that network access is not very attractive to demanders when network construction is still in its initial phase. The number of other demanders at the beginning produces a substantial share of the overall benefit, and at first it will be difficult to encourage interested demanders to enter the network. This problem is resolved when the network reaches the number of participants constituting the prerequisite for other interested parties to become a member. This minimum number of participants creates a turning point in the marketing efforts of the provider, makes the network attractive for other potential users or customers and is called a critical mass. For the management, it is essential to reach this point as quickly as possible in order to become profitable, expand business and develop a secure position vis-a-vis possible competitors.

As a general rule, five phases accompany the individual adoption and associated purchasing processes necessary to generate a critical mass. The first is the awareness phase, and it is characterized by entry into the purchase process and weak contact with the customer. In the second (interest) phase, the customer is informing himself about different sharing economy providers and uses this knowledge as a basis on which to make deci-

sions. In the third (evaluation) phase, the customer tries to answer whether the sharing economy offer is useful. In the fourth (trial) phase, the customer tries out an offer on trial. In the final (takeover) phase, the adoption of the sharing economy offer is put into practice (Rogers 1962). Critical mass considerations have a long tradition in adoption and diffusion research and examine how a dissemination of innovations in markets occurs and how networks are built up. Because the critical mass problems occur when building up a network, e.g. a sharing economy network, two successive and interrelated tasks of providers crop up. First, there is a mission of information. To take suitable actions in building up the network knowledge relating to the desirable, necessary number of participants is needed. In a second step, providers need to establish the measures that are necessary to reach the pre-determined critical mass, and a suitable program of measures needs to be developed.

Network management

When a critical mass is reached, the network business has to be managed. New marketing tasks emerge. The network provider needs to ensure that the customer group benefit is achieved; if not, there could be recourse claims. Rules within the network are necessary in order to avoid negative influences on the customer group benefit. For this reason, sharing economy providers have general terms and conditions and often established network rules. Their development and use is characterized by three steps: determination, control and sanctifying implementation, all of which are based on each other. To initiate positive effects for the individual customer group benefit, the question arises whether steps that intensify future network use should be taken, or whether past network use should be rewarded. If the future network use is improved, situational measures can be taken into account, e.g. sharing economy providers could offer temporary price reductions. Network users would be willing to use the network to the full extent. Furthermore, product variations are taken into account. DriveNow e.g. offers a lot of different cars to satisfy its customer needs and to offer variety. If network use is rewarded, gratification and memberships in customer clubs are two of the possibilities to encourage customers to use the network in the future. Furthermore, the network members who did not use the network in the past have an incentive to use it in the future. Providers also need to ensure that customers are confident when they use the network. Thus, they can avoid a reversed domino effect in which a large amount of network users leave the network together. Additionally, it can be of interest for the provider to use the once-established network for future network businesses. This is possible if the customer group benefit was achieved in the previous business. Another possibility to manage the network business is to initiate word-of-mouth propaganda. This is also possible by using the Internet and social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. In so doing, customer segments that have not yet been reached can be cultivated. Consequently, providers who market services in the network business need to pay attention to the network management, too. Fundamentally, the provider needs to pursue the target to influence the behavior of network users in such a way that they use the network effectively and gain a customer group's benefit. Moreover, the network withdrawal of network participants needs to be prevented in order to impede negative impacts on the network attendance (Voeth 2003).

Being able to manage a network is essential. However, in the case of a sharing economy, the basic problem primarily consists of building a network and creating a usage-related

customer group benefit. Against this background, a critical mass needs to be reached in order to encourage further customers to enter the network and thus raise the number of participants. A sharing economy can only be successful if it succeeds in generating a critical mass by using the system, and the customer group benefit is achieved. In order to reach this goal, marketing measures need to be derived.

3 Marketing measures to accelerate the adoption and diffusion of sharing economy offers

When building a sharing economy network and disseminating their offers, providers need to take marketing measures into account in order to deal successfully with critical masses. In principle, two different approaches are conceivable. On the one hand, providers can try to reach the demanders' existing critical masses with suitable measures and thus expand the number of participants by accelerating the diffusion processes. On the other hand, providers might try to reduce the demanders' critical masses.

Figure 2 illustrates marketing measures to influence critical mass systems and increase the acceptance and diffusion of sharing economy offers (cf. here and in the following Voeth 2003; Voeth/ Liehr 2005). Two types of measures can be distinguished: measures that directly increase the installed base and measures that reduce the importance of the installed base.

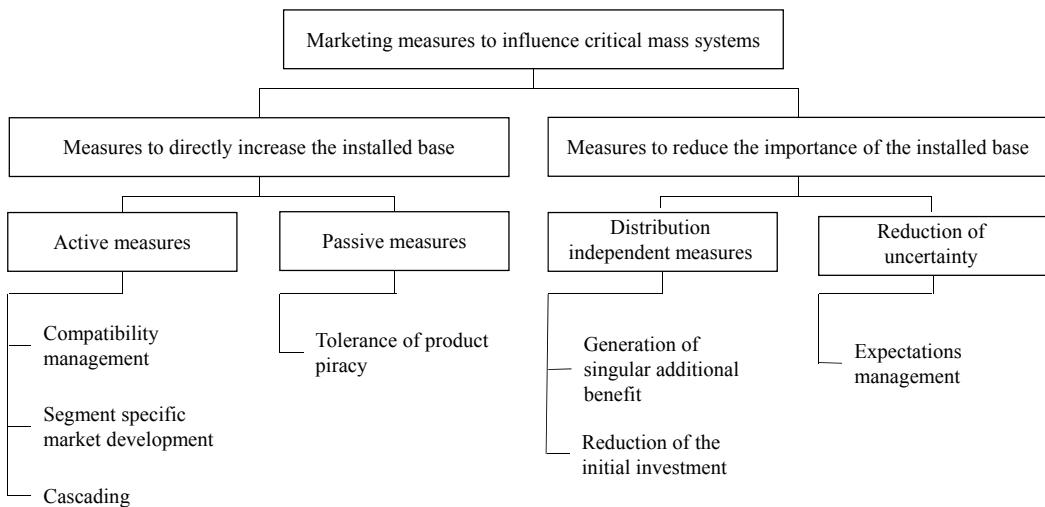


Figure 2: Marketing measures to influence critical mass systems (Voeth/ Liehr 2005)

Measures that directly increase the installed base

In the range of measures to increase the installed base directly, Figure 2 shows that there are four measures to expand the critical mass. Three of them are active measures, and one is passive. If providers aim for compatibility with existing systems while they build a network, they are pursuing the target to reach the critical mass of many potential demanders as quickly as possible by using the already installed basis of existing systems. In this way, the takeover of existing systems can be successful for companies that refer back to their own demanders or to the competitors' demanders. Airbnb is an example of compatibility

management. In the USA, the company offers boat sharing as well as home sharing. Besides its main business, which is home sharing, Airbnb pursues the target of reaching a critical mass by providing additional compatible offers, like boats, where customers can also sleep and spend their time (Guttentag 2015; Airbnb 2016). Fon is another example of a company that is trying to reach compatibility by helping to share broadband Internet access. Fon is not installing or running the hotspots themselves but rather placing its bets on people who provide Internet access to other members of the Fon network. In so doing, the firm uses existing systems for a sharing offer, and Fon is making them compatible and accessible in order to gain new customers (Fon 2015). In addition, companies like YouTube that allow video sharing integrate their videos in websites like Facebook where personal life events are shared with friends. YouTube is thus taking over an existing system in order to spread its own services (John 2013b).

Another possibility to expand the critical mass is a segment-specific market development. In a first step, a segmentation of the total market is essential. Segment-specific measures also need to be derived. The segmentation of the total market splits heterogeneous total markets into homogenous submarkets by means of certain characteristics of effective or potential customers (Freter 1995). The selection of market segmentation criteria is particularly important. One criterion in the network business is the individual critical mass. For providers, it is essential to split the groups in such a way that members of the generated segments have the same individual critical mass. Another criterion is the type of the group's perceived benefit. It is necessary to carry out if the customer group benefit has a similar structure to all potential demanders or it is possible to observe segments with a heterogeneous segment-overlapping composition of the customer group benefit. Provided that groups with different critical masses are observable in the overall market, providers have to decide whether the segments should be developed simultaneously or are served with different service ranges. In this regard, price or product differentiation is feasible. In the case of sharing economy offers, it might be conceivable that different age groups have different perceived benefits and consequential different critical masses, e.g. private product sharing offers like Bla Bla Car, where people arrange drives and travel together. In this case, marketing measures should focus on the different age groups and try to increase the installed base separately.

A third possibility to expand the critical mass is called cascading. Individual critical mass includes not only quantitative but also qualitative aspects. Considerations by Weiber (1992) and Schloder (1995) show that not all network members are equally important for the customer group benefit to occur. Therefore, in the course of cascading, providers identify in the overall individual critical mass those small groups that are of great importance and provide them with individual offers. These groups are possibly interesting for demanders, because they receive an incentive to enter the development-situated network together. Providers need to think about the targeted approach of the identified small groups. For example, while building the clothes-sharing portal Kleiderkreisel, the target group might have been young women because they are interested in clothes and like to share them and their experiences with friends (Kleiderkreisel 2015). In the case of JustPark, the most important customers for building and managing the network might be the customers who live in towns, because parking spaces are incredibly scarce in the city area. Therefore, this target group in particular should be promoted (JustPark 2015).

A passive criterion is the tolerance of product piracy, which has an indirect impact on the critical mass. Pirated products are copied and sold without permission from the original manufacturer (*McDonald/ Roberts 1995*). This is classified as a passive criterion, because the product provider does not intervene in these developments. A kind of product piracy can be observed at rideshare opportunities like Bla Bla Car, Uber or fahrgemeinschaft.de (*Bla Bla Car 2015; fahrgemeinschaft.de 2016, Kindel et al. 2015*): They offer the same service (a rideshare) and almost copy each other. Another example of product piracy is the sharing of information on platforms like *Wikipedia* (2016), where information is shared without the permission of the owner. Companies and people generally allow this activity, because these platforms raise their publicity.

Measures to reduce the importance of the installed base

With regard to the objective of reducing the importance of the demanders' critical masses, providers can generate distribution-independent measures or reduce uncertainty. Concerning the distribution-independent measures, the yield of a singular additional benefit plays a role. The significance of the individual critical mass phenomenon and the extent of the network business's starting problem can be reduced by enriching the overall performance with additional performance elements. In so doing, the additional performance elements create a singular benefit without any customer group benefit. One possibility to create a singular benefit is a happy-hour strategy. It is possible for car-sharing providers, for example, to offer happy-hour prices at night, when their car fleet is not used as often as during the day.

The significance of the 'critical mass' decision criterion can be reduced by a provider's orientation toward a consideration dimension and not a performance dimension. Hence, another distribution-independent measure is the reduction of the initial investment. This is achieved by means of a price reduction for entering the network. In this way, a domino effect can be triggered, which leads to a gradual entrance of customers into the network. An example for this is Flinkster, Deutsche Bahn's car-sharing platform. It offers rail card members free registration on the portal and thus reduces the initial investment to use the sharing system (*Flinkster 2015*). Another example is the chat platform WhatsApp, through which customers are able to share information with others in chat groups. At the time when WhatsApp was launched, there was no initial investment. The application could be downloaded for free. By taking this approach, the app developer reached a critical mass very fast, as WhatsApp quickly grew into a frequently used news service. As the service reached a certain market dissemination, the provider claimed a purchase amount for downloading the app. Because the critical mass was reached long ago and many customers were already using it, new customers were willing to pay (*WhatsApp 2016*).

A measure that reduces uncertainty and the significance of the critical mass is expectations management. Expectations management concerns future dissemination in the market. Demanders might be willing, for a variety of reasons, including reputation, to enter the development-situated network earlier if they assume that the network will reach dissemination in the foreseeable future, within a period of time that they consider to be acceptable. Furthermore, self-fulfilling prophecy mechanisms have shown that one part of market growth emerges because of the market participants' belief in the positive market development that is forecast (*Werle 1994*). Accordingly, demanders are quite willing to enter the market before it reaches its individual critical mass. Therefore, the creation of ex-

pectation-caused benefit is of considerable importance for the diffusion of new products or services. Demanders would be willing to buy a service before reaching the individual critical mass if they can assume that the critical mass will be reached in the foreseeable future. In this regard, the main task of the expectation management is the reduction of uncertainty. Instruments for this purpose include guarantees or credible assurances. Guaranteed binding assurances concern the future dissemination of a sharing economy offer, for example. If providers do not want to make a binding assurance, they often use credible assurances. Customers receive signals indicating that the sharing economy offer will achieve the necessary dissemination in the foreseeable future. This is a matter of confidence. An example of gaining trust and meeting the expectations of customers is the evaluation system of Airbnb. Providers of this home-sharing platform can describe their homes and their furnishings. After using the sharing offer, customers are invited to evaluate the sharing offer. By comparing the different evaluations with each other, future customers are able to assess whether their expectations will likely be met or not, and the provider can emphasize its expectations management (Airbnb 2016).

Table 1 summarizes the presented measures and their examples, as well as the examples' issues. The table illustrates how there is a variety of sharing economy examples in which different, adapted measures influence the critical mass.

Measure	Selected Examples	Issue
Compatibility management	Airbnb	Flat or boat sharing
	Fon	Broadband Internet access sharing
	YouTube	Video sharing
Segment-specific market development	Bla Bla Car	Ridesharing
Cascading	Kleiderkreisel	Clothes sharing
	JustPark	Parking space sharing
Tolerance of product piracy	Bla Bla Car, Uber, fahrgemeinschaft.de	Ridesharing
	Wikipedia	Information sharing
Generation of singular additional benefit	Car sharing in general	Night tariff
Reduction of the initial investment	Flinkster	Car sharing
	WhatsApp	Information sharing
Expectations management	Airbnb	Flat or boat sharing

Table 1: Measures to influence the critical mass with selected examples

The measures above can be used to change individual critical masses and help to market sharing economy offers as part of customer-to-customer marketing as well as to generate a better customer group benefit. Furthermore, the adoption and diffusion of sharing econo-

my offers can be increased by means of a suitable application of the presented measures as well as an appropriate management of the sharing economy network.

4 Summary

Despite having major potential for growth, sharing economy offers cannot reach their predicted capabilities (*Belk 2014; Loose 2007*). This is because marketing activities are often not suitable to the requirements of the sharing economy. As in the sharing economy, in which customers share their property or offer services to other customers (*Keller 2013*), it must be seen as a phenomenon of customer-to-customer marketing. Therefore, it needs appropriate measures derived from customer-to-customer marketing to market offers in this growing field. To derive these adequate measures, we first pointed out the main characteristics of customer-to-customer marketing and focused mainly on the concept of the customer group benefit. A customer group benefit arises if (common) goods are used commonly, and the benefit of use depends on the other users. This is also evident in sharing economy offers, which can only work if a networked group of people is acting together to produce a joint benefit (*Kindel et al. 2015*). Therefore, a sharing economy can be classified as a form of network business. In the network business, providers build up a group whose members are connected through the commonly used service or product and the usage-related customer group benefit. To offer sharing economy selections successfully, we remarked that a critical mass of users is needed so that there is a customer group benefit, which will lead to a consideration of participating in the sharing economy. While constructing a sharing economy network, the fundamental problem is caused by the network entry's low attractiveness for users. Customers are only willing to use a sharing economy network if a critical mass of other customers are already using it, too. To solve this critical mass problem and to provide suitable marketing measures to increase the attractiveness to enter and use sharing economy networks, we offered a wide range of measures to reach the existing critical masses of the demanders and thus expand the number of participants through the acceleration of diffusion processes or to reduce the critical masses of the demanders. This contribution shows that compatibility management, segment-specific market development, cascading, the tolerance of product piracy, the generation of a single additional customer benefit, the reduction of the initial investment and expectations management are possible approaches to solve critical mass problems and to increase the adoption and diffusion of sharing economy offers. They also enhance the acceptance of using these offers. Furthermore, it is shown that existing sharing economy networks need to be managed in order to achieve success over the long term.

In summary, the paper appropriates indications to market sharing economy offers better, and it provides a theoretical background of customer-to-customer marketing and benefit-related issues. Sharing economy providers should use the developed marketing measures to increase the amount of customers directly by using the sharing system and create a critical mass for their sharing network. Furthermore, providers need to focus on reducing the importance of the critical mass so that customers enter the network even if their required critical mass has not yet been achieved. By using the measures presented here, the adoption and diffusion problem of sharing economy offers can be resolved, and providers will be able to disseminate their products or services successfully. Future research in this field should focus on the development of further measures to market sharing economy offers and on the practical testing and comparison of the methods presented here.

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